

# FOCUS

## on Fort Smith

ARKANSAS

A Quarterly Newsletter by the City of Fort Smith

January, 2004

## Fort Smith Recognized for Volunteerism

Fort Smith was named one of 12 Arkansas volunteer communities of the year for 2003. This was the 6<sup>th</sup> time and the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year Fort Smith received the volunteerism award.

The award recognizes the nearly 1.6 million hours volunteered by 19,500 Fort Smithians in more than 400 volunteer activities. Mayor **Ray Baker** recently accepted the award at an Arkansas Municipal League convention.

There's hundreds of examples of how volunteerism improves the quality of life in Fort Smith. Here's a few.

- \* Medical and dental professionals provide free care for those who otherwise couldn't afford it.
- \* Nursing home residents receive one-on-one visits.
- \* Emergency housing is provided for children whose parents are unable to care for them.
- \* At-risk school children who might not otherwise eat on weekends are sent home on Fridays with a 7-meal backpack.



- \* Residents needing help with light household chores are assisted by junior high and senior high students.
- \* Mentors help welfare recipients become self-sufficient.
- \* Volunteers with mental and physical disabilities remove litter from parks.
- \* Abandoned pets are cared for by volunteers.

Volunteerism breaks down social, economic and other barriers by providing opportunities for citizens of diverse backgrounds to help one another. Fort Smith has hundreds of opportunities for volunteers.

If you'd like to become involved in a richly rewarding experience, contact your favorite service agency, any school or church, any hospital, the United Way at 782-1311, Project Compassion at 783-2273 or RSVP (retired senior volunteer program) at 783-4155. Your time and talents will help make *Life Worth Living in Fort Smith!*

## Police Reports Now On Line

Citizens of Fort Smith needing copies of police reports may now access those reports on the Internet without having to visit the Fort Smith police department.

Persons wanting police reports or traffic accident reports may now retrieve those reports through the Fort Smith police department's web site at [www.fortsmithpd.org](http://www.fortsmithpd.org). There's no charge for accessing and printing the reports on line. Citizens who come to the police station for report copies will continue to

be charged the customary copying fees.

When a person files a police report, the officer will provide a card. The card will have the call for service number, the date of the report and the last name of the person making the report. This information can then be used to access police reports on line. Offense and incident reports will remain on line for 90 days, and traffic accident reports will be kept on line for 3 years. Citizens should allow 3 business days for the

**See Police Reports**, page 2

## Bond Refinancing Saves \$\$\$

Last month, the board of directors authorized the refinancing of \$8.7 million of water and sewer bonds. The bonds were issued in 1994 at a time when interest rates were higher. The new bonds will take advantage of significantly lower interest rates.

The bond refinancing will save Fort Smith's water and sewer customers nearly \$586,000 over the remaining 6 years of the bonds.

**Police Reports**, from page 1 reports to become available on line.

The online availability of police reports is a convenient way for citizens and insurance adjusters to obtain these reports. On line access also saves the FSPD significant amounts of police staff time and copying costs.

Don't limit investing to the financial world. Invest something of yourself, and you will be richly rewarded.

.....Charles R. Schwab in  
You're Fifty - Now What?

## CITY HALL FEASIBILITY STUDY UNDERWAY

The board of directors has authorized a study to determine the feasibility of constructing a city hall in the 900 block on the north side of Garrison Ave. The study should be completed next month.

The feasibility study will consider the possibility of preserving the 1911 New Theater and Peacock Alley and renovating it into a public meeting and performance space. When not used for board and commission meetings, the 400-seat venue could be available for entertainment events.

The city hall will be designed with citizen convenience at the forefront. A drive-through window for bill payments will be considered. Convenient and ample parking for city hall patrons will be paramount.

The project could be constructed without a tax increase. Bonds could be issued and repaid with a portion of the city's franchise fee revenue. Franchise fee revenue comes from electric, telephone, gas and cable TV service.

The project would result in the restoration of a historic building, provide a modern city hall to better serve citizens, and stimulate additional development at the east end of Garrison Ave. The community's governmental center would be an important anchor in downtown Fort Smith.

Fort Smith is believed to be the largest city in the United States without a city hall. City offices have been rented in the Stephens Bldg. at 623 Garrison Ave. for the last 26 years.

## 2004 City Budget ..... your \$ at work

The City of Fort Smith's 2004 budget allocates \$230 million to provide public services and projects for all areas of the city. The budget includes resources for day-to-day operations, capital projects, debt payments and grant programs.

Key goals in the 2004 budget include:

- Establish a long-term economic development strategy for the region.
- Continued implementation of the city's master plan, particularly updates to the land use plan, zoning ordinance and master street plan.
- Strengthen financial solvency by increasing fund balances.
- Develop a citizen service culture which is consistent, predictable, reliable and promotes extra effort from city employees.
- Become a regional provider of services.

The 2004 budget allocates resources for these and other goals.

One of the largest parts of the budget is for day-to-day services. These services include police, fire, street maintenance, water and sewer, parks and recreation, planning and development services, sanitation, district court, transit, convention center and administrative services. The 2004 operating budget totals \$80 million.

Resources are provided to continue community policing programs, quality transit services, highly responsive fire protection, reliable water and sewer services and exceptional sanitation services. The budget allocates resources to begin recreation programming in the parks department.

Capital improvement projects total \$106 million of the 2004 budget. Most of these costs are for the Lake Fort Smith water supply expansion and major roadway improvement projects.

Services will be provided with estimated operating resources of \$80 million. The city didn't increase its property tax rate (millage) for the 2004 budget. The 2004 budget includes water and sewer billing increases of 9% - 13% to help pay for the Lake Fort Smith water supply expansion project. Residential sanitation rates will increase 6.1%, commercial sanitation rates will remain the same and industrial roll-off collection costs will decrease 3.2%.

The 2004 budget will allow the city to continue providing the services and programs residents and business people expect and value. These services and programs improve the quality of life and business in Fort Smith.

## Mayor's Easter Egg Hunt



Colorful Easter eggs await children at the Mayor's annual Easter egg hunt sponsored by the Hawg Country Eagles. The search for the springtime goodies will begin at 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at Tilles Park, 3700 Grand Ave. Children ages 1 - 10 are invited to join the hunt for the Easter bunny's treasures.



# New Year Brings Change at Landfill

For many years, Fort Smithians have taken advantage of the monthly free Saturday at the Fort Smith landfill. The program makes it easier for residents to rid themselves of unwanted items. On the first Saturday of each month, hundreds of people would bring loads of household rubbish to the landfill for disposal without charge.

The free service resulted in long lines at the landfill. Some residents would wait in line 2-3 hours. The free service was also contributing to the financial strain on the sanitation fund since the costs had to be borne by the paying customers.

Two changes have been made to the program. First, Fort Smith residents will be able to bring a pickup truck load to the landfill any Saturday. However, there will be a \$5 charge to

cover some of the costs of providing the service. The charge on weekdays will remain at \$12.

These changes are expected to shorten the lines since residents can use the service any Saturday instead of only one Saturday a month. Residents shouldn't have to spend as much time waiting in line. The new charge will help recover some of the cost of providing the service.

Instituting the charge was done after careful consideration. The charge allows the service to be provided every Saturday. The \$5 charge is still a bargain, and hundreds less than a fine for illegal dumping.

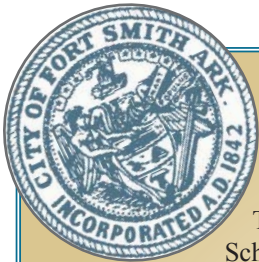
Residents needing more information about \$5 Saturdays may call the Fort Smith sanitation department at 784-2350.

## Calling All Neighborhoods

Does your neighborhood have an association or some other organization? If so, the city's planning department would like to establish a line of communication with your neighborhood.

The City of Fort Smith provides many services that strengthen and support neighborhoods. When problems arise, the city can discuss solutions with the neighborhood and let residents know what resources are available.

If you have a neighborhood association, please contact Brenda Andrews in the planning department at 784-2219 with the name of the association, its boundaries, and the name, address and telephone number of the association president. The information can also be e-mailed to [bandrews@fsark.com](mailto:bandrews@fsark.com).



## City Board Meetings

Board of Directors meetings are held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 6 p.m. in the Fort Smith Public Schools Service Center, 3205 Jenny Lind Road, building B.

Study sessions are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 12 noon at the main Fort Smith public library, 3201 Rogers Avenue.

To learn of agenda information, call the city clerk's office at 784-2208. Agendas and meeting minutes may be viewed on the city's web site at [www.fsark.com](http://www.fsark.com). Click on board of directors.

The public is invited to all meetings. At regular meetings, the public may comment on agenda items and may introduce items involving city government not listed on the agenda.

### Mayor

C. Ray Baker

### Board of Directors

Ken Pyle, Ward 1

Nan Bartlett, Ward 2

Rick Parrish, Ward 3

Joe Davis, Ward 4

Gary Campbell, At Large, Position 5

Ben Shipley, At Large, Position 6

Dr. Cole Goodman, At Large, Position 7

### City Administrator

Bill Harding

# AD SPACE



## Grins & Groans



Grins to the 19,500 residents who helped make Fort Smith a 2003 Arkansas volunteer community of the year.



Groans to motorists who don't pull to the right for responding fire engines, ambulances and police cars.



# UTILITY CUSTOMERS SEE INCREASE

Water, sewer and sanitation customers will likely have noticed an increase in their municipal utility bills this month. Most customers saw modest increases with their January billings.

## *Lake Fort Smith Project Necessitates Rate Adjustment*

The water and sewer increase is due to recent issuances of water and sewer revenue bonds. The bond proceeds will be used to pay for a large part of the Lake Fort Smith water supply construction costs.

The project is being financed with a combination of sales tax bonds and water/sewer revenue bonds. In 2001, Fort Smith voters overwhelmingly approved the issuance of \$50 million in sales tax bonds. The remaining costs of the \$180 million project are being paid with bonds supported by water and sewer rates.

At the time of the sales tax election, it was estimated that residential rates would increase 31% - 42% if the sales tax passed. The actual rate increases are 33% to 45%. These increases are being phased in over a 3-year period.

The first two increases occurred in 2002 and 2003. The last increase became effective earlier this month. The 2004 rates are 9% - 13% higher than the 2003 rates.

## *Sanitation Rates Also Adjusted*

Some sanitation rates were also adjusted for the first time in 2 years.

⇒ The rate for residential sanitation service 3 times a week went from \$10.23 to \$10.85 a month, a 6.1% increase. One-half of this increase is

due to allocating the city-wide clean up costs to residential customers. This popular program places roll-off containers at several city-wide locations 2 times a year for residents to dispose of rubbish and other unwanted items in roll-off containers. The costs of this program were previously borne by the city's industrial roll off customers. They're now being paid by residential customers who receive the service.

- ⇒ Commercial sanitation rates will remain unchanged for 2004.
- ⇒ Roll off service for industrial customers will decrease 3.2% as a result of allocating city-wide cleanup costs to residential customers.
- ⇒ Most landfill rates will remain the same for 2004. The free day on the first Saturday of each month has been replaced with a new program to help reduce the long lines. On any Saturday, Fort Smith residents may dispose one pick up truck load for a flat fee of \$5. The charge on weekdays remains at \$12.

Rate adjustments are never a popular topic. However, these adjustments were anticipated as part of the financing for the Lake Fort Smith project and will keep the sanitation fund self-supporting. The rates will ensure the region has a dependable, high quality source of water for several decades to come and has reliable and efficient sanitation services.

# VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS HONORS

Mayor **Ray Baker** has announced the 13<sup>th</sup> annual mayor's honors for the visual and performing arts (formerly the civic center honors) will be held on Tuesday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. The awards will be presented in the Arkansas Best Performing Arts Theater at the Fort Smith Convention Center. The 2004 young artist achievement awards will also be presented.

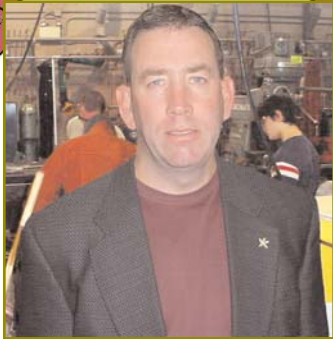
The mayor's honors for the arts are given each year to 3 individuals and a business who promote the visual or performing arts in Fort Smith. Past honorees have included performers, artists, poets and those who bring the arts to Fort Smith.

Nomination forms are available at all public libraries, the chamber of commerce, 612 Garrison Ave., by calling the mayor's office at 784-2437, or by e-mailing the mayor's office at [joberste@fsark.com](mailto:joberste@fsark.com). Nominations must be received by February 20<sup>th</sup>.

## *Fast Facts About Fort Smith*

*The warmest temperature ever recorded in Fort Smith was 113°F on August 10, 1936. The coldest-ever temperature occurred on January 12, 1918. That day, Fort Smith's population of 28,890 braved a bone-chilling -11°F.*

## HOMETOWN HOSPITALITY HERO



Fort Smith and our region benefit tremendously from conventions and events brought to our area. Attracting these happenings relies on the efforts of everyone in the hospitality industry. However, some of the best leads come from local citizens.

**Pat Widders** has been named the newest *hometown hospitality hero*. Widders is the director of the Western Arkansas Technical Center on the UA Fort Smith campus. He was instrumental in bringing nearly 500 career-minded high school and college students to Fort Smith for a skills conference. The conference brought an estimated economic benefit of \$125,000 to Fort Smith. On behalf of Fort Smith's hospitality community, *THE FOCUS* thanks Pat Widders for bringing the Arkansas Skills USA-VICA conference to Fort Smith.

*Contact the Fort Smith convention and visitors bureau to see how you and your group can be recognized as a Fort Smith hometown hospitality hero. Call Ramona Moon at 783-8888.*

# AD SPACE

## Bonds to Finance Gerber Plant Updates

....baby food jars replaced with  
plastic packaging

In November, the Fort Smith board of directors authorized the issuance of up to \$65 million of industrial development revenue bonds for Gerber Products Company. Gerber will use the bond proceeds to update its packaging process from glass jars to plastic containers.

Consumers want packaging that's convenient and go-anywhere. The conversion to plastic packaging at the Fort Smith plant will assure the plant's leading position with Gerber's customers.

According to plant manager **Karen Flatley**, the bonds will keep Gerber's Fort Smith plant at the cutting edge of the baby food market. She noted that Fort Smith's manufacturing-friendly environment helped the local plant win the new packaging technology.

Gerber has manufactured baby food at its Fort Smith plant since 1964. Nearly 600 people are employed at the plant located at 4301 Harriet Ln. Last year, Gerber produced 600 million jars of baby food in Fort Smith.

# 9-1-1 Heroes Save Lives and Property

Mayor **Ray Baker** recently recognized 8 citizen heroes at an appreciation reception. The honorees went above and beyond to protect the lives and property of Fort Smith citizens. Here's a summary of the good deeds performed by the 9-1-1 heroes.

Police patrol officer **Kelly Colton** responded to a domestic disturbance call. Upon her arrival, she found a man with a shotgun chasing a woman. The man fired his weapon at officer Colton's patrol car. Officer Colton quickly provided instructions to the female victim, helping her escape from the gunman. Officer Colton then repositioned herself and the patrol car. Officer Colton's quick-thinking allowed the suspect to be taken into custody without anyone suffering injury.

Sanitation department workers **Roger Guinn** and **Robert Marks** were on their collection route in the 2300 block of Wirsing Ave.

when they noticed smoke coming from a residence. Without concern for their own safety, the pair entered the residence and extinguished an electrical fire. Their observant eyes and quick actions minimized damage to the residence.

A suspect fleeing from Sebastian County Sheriff's deputies was located in Fort Smith by police captain **Dean Pitts**.

The suspect ignored Pitts' requests to stop. Pitts had to forcibly stop the subject, who then pulled a knife and repeatedly stabbed Pitts. Even though he had been stabbed in the neck, Pitts was able to use his firearm to subdue the suspect and keep him from escaping.

Fire captain **Wade Garcia** and firefighter **David Ulrich** removed a victim from a burning residence in the 400 block of North 21<sup>st</sup> St. Without regard for their own safety, the two entered the burning structure and found the victim lying face down on the floor. They quickly removed the victim who suffered burns to his back and face and was overcome by smoke inhalation.

The victim later recovered at the hospital.

Undercover drug operations are always well-planned, but sometimes don't go according to script. An undercover police sergeant and detective encountered 2 drug dealers who

may have wanted to do more than sell drugs. When the officers entered the motel room, one of the suspects followed them inside while the other remained outside. As the drug buy ensued, the officers noticed the dealer had a lock blade knife beside his leg. The other suspect then abruptly came into the room and closed the door, thereby enclosing

the undercover officers in the room with at least one armed suspect. After the drug buy was completed, support officers entered the room to make the arrests. The second suspect was concealing a revolver. The undercover police officers risked great harm to themselves to remove 2 drug dealers from the streets.

*THE FOCUS* congratulates all of these 9-1-1 heroes for their selfless acts to help protect lives and property in Fort Smith.

## Street & Drainage Work Approved

The board of directors recently reviewed a 5-year plan for street, bridge and drainage work in Fort Smith. Authorization was given to proceed with the 2004 projects. The budget is funded with the 1¢ sales tax for streets, bridges and drainage and with federal grant funds.

The 5-year plan totals nearly \$106 million. Major projects include widening of Kelley Hwy., completion of the Phoenix Ave. widening, extension of Massard Rd. into Chaffee Crossing, widening of Jenny Lind Rd. from

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**\$106 million projected  
over next 5 years**

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Dodson Ave. to Cavanaugh Rd., widening of Albert Pike Ave. from Grand Ave. to Free Ferry Rd. and improvements to the May Branch drainage way through north Fort Smith. The Jenny Lind Rd. and May Branch projects are contingent on federal funding which hasn't yet been approved.

In 2004, an estimated \$37 million will be spent on more than 20 different projects. These projects range from major roadway construction to neighborhood street overlays and drainage projects to intersection signalization projects. A complete list of 2004 projects may be viewed on the city's web site at [www.fsark.com](http://www.fsark.com).

Residents with suggestions for future roadway or drainage projects may contact the Fort Smith engineering department at 784-2225.



## GUESS WHO'S COMING TO TOWN!

*THE FOCUS* has learned the following newly-constructed businesses will soon be opening in Fort Smith.

<b>Pizza Pro</b>	2900 S. Zero	Jan., 2004
<b>Fresh Beanz Coffee</b>	9501 Rogers Ave.	Feb., 2004
<b>Carr &amp; Carr law office</b>	14 North 3 <sup>rd</sup> St.	Mar., 2004
<b>Sparks Federal Credit Union</b>	1001 S. 21 <sup>st</sup> St.	July, 2004
<b>U.S. Attorney's Office</b>	414 Parker Ave.	Dec., 2004
<b>Wal-Mart Super Center</b>	Kelley Hwy & I-540	Spring, 2005



# Be Aware When Lights and Sirens Approach..



When you or a loved one needs the immediate help of a police officer, firefighter or paramedic, you want that help to arrive as quickly as possible. The speedy arrival of emergency responders depends on the cooperation of hundreds of motorists they'll encounter while traveling to you.

Motorists must yield the right-of-way to police cars, ambulances and fire trucks with lights or sirens. Here's what motorists **should** do when an emergency vehicle approaches.

- 🚓 Remain calm and don't panic.
- 🚓 You can't go wrong by pulling to the right and coming to a stop. When you're in the right lane, pull onto the right shoulder if there's room. Stop or slow down until the emergency vehicle passes you.
- 🚓 When you're in the left lane and traffic on the right moves to the right, move right into their lane.
- 🚓 If you can't go right because of an obstacle, the next best thing is to stop. The driver of an emergency vehicle can then anticipate where to move his or her vehicle. If you continue to travel, someone else might not see the emergency vehicle or may respond inappropriately. You're at greater risk of collision when you're moving.
- 🚓 When you're at an intersection with a stop sign or red light, stay where you are if you can't pull to the right. Don't move until the police car, ambulance or fire truck has passed through the intersection.
- 🚓 If you're on a one-way street and in the left lane, it may be safer to pull to the left rather than to the right.

Here's some things you **shouldn't** do when an emergency vehicle approaches.

- 🚓 Stop in the middle of the lane when there's room to pull right.
- 🚓 Pull to the left into the center turn lane or left turn lane.

- 🚓 Drive through a red light or stop sign when an emergency vehicle is approaching.
- 🚓 Make a quick left turn into a driveway or another street.
- 🚓 Race ahead to get through a green light before the emergency vehicle gets there.
- 🚓 Disregard and continue to travel despite the emergency vehicle.

Generally, emergency vehicle drivers will move left since other drivers are expected to move right. Sometimes traffic conditions will require the emergency vehicle to travel in opposing lanes. This is why it's so important for drivers to respect emergency vehicles by moving out of

the way and stopping. That will provide the space needed and give an escape route if something goes wrong.

Police officers, firefighters and paramedics are thoroughly trained and tested in emergency response driving. They're taught first to drive with regard for the safety of others. Drivers of emergency vehicles know that they can't help anyone if they don't get there.

When you or someone you care about needs the help of a police officer, firefighter or paramedic, you'll be thankful for the motorists who didn't impede their response and allowed their safe and prompt arrival.

AD  
SPACE

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Exciting events  
around town...

<i>Harriett Truman</i>	Jan. 27	Presented by the Living Arts for Students. Fort Smith convention center. 9:30 a.m.; 1-800-627-6307 for tickets
<i>Titanic</i>	Jan. 29	Presented by UA Fort Smith. Fort Smith convention center. 7:30 p.m.; Tickets \$33; 788-7300
<i>RV Show</i>	Jan. 30 - Feb. 1	Find the latest in motor homes and other recreational vehicles at the Fort Smith convention center
<i>Classic Ecstasy</i>	Jan. 31	Violinist Felicia Moye joins the Fort Smith Symphony for the works of Glinka, Dvorak, Ravel & Brahms. Fort Smith convention center. 7:30 p.m.; 452-7575 or <a href="http://www.fortsmithsymphony.org">www.fortsmithsymphony.org</a> for tickets
<i>Bridal Fest</i>	Feb. 8	Find everything for your wedding and enjoy entertainment, a fashion show and food. Presented by the Southwest Times Record at the Fort Smith convention center; 785-7728 for more info
<i>Southern Gospel Concert</i>	Feb. 21	Presented by Frank Arnold Ministries at the Fort Smith convention center. 6 p.m.; 918-445-2400 for info and tickets
<i>Vanities</i>	Feb. 23	Presented by UA Fort Smith. Fort Smith convention center. 7:30 p.m.; Tickets \$35; 788-7300
<i>Miss UA Fort Smith Pageant</i>	Mar. 6	Help UA Fort Smith crown its entrant into the Miss Arkansas Pageant. UAFS Breedlove Auditorium; 788-7302 or <a href="http://www.uafortsmith.edu">www.uafortsmith.edu</a>
<i>Earthquake!</i>	Mar. 8	The Fort Smith Symphony performs the wildest, fastest, coolest music for area 6 <sup>th</sup> graders. FREE admission. Fort Smith convention center. 10 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.; 452-7575 or <a href="http://www.fortsmithsymphony.org">www.fortsmithsymphony.org</a> for info
<i>Red Stocking Revue</i>	Mar 12 - 13	The best in local talent raises money for Bost Human Development Services. Alma Performing Arts Center.; 782-6801 or <a href="http://www.bost.org">www.bost.org</a> for info and tickets
<i>Bluegrass on the Border</i>	Mar. 20	A variety of bluegrass music at the Fort Smith convention center. 2:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. Tickets: \$15, Advance-\$12; 452-7276 or <a href="http://www.louisianagrass.com">www.louisianagrass.com</a> for info and tickets
<i>Arkansas River Valley Lawn &amp; Garden Show</i>	Mar. 26 - 28	Landscaping ideas, demonstrations, lectures and more. Fort Smith convention center. Admission: \$3; 646-6878 for info
<i>The Wizard of Oz</i>	Apr. 2 - 4	The Youth Arts Coalition presents this beloved story. Fort Smith convention center; 783-7827 for show times and tickets
<i>Mayor's Bird Conference</i>	Apr. 8	Fort Smith River Park events bldg., 8 a.m.; 784-2437 or e-mail <a href="mailto:joberste@fsark.com">joberste@fsark.com</a> for info and registration
<i>Rheem Classic Golf Tournament</i>	Apr. 19 - 25	Join PGA stars of tomorrow as they vie for a win on the Nationwide Tour. Pro-ams, youth events and nightly entertainment at Hardscrabble Country Club; 782-3410 or <a href="http://www.rheemclassic.com">www.rheemclassic.com</a> for more info
<i>Shall We Dance</i>	Apr. 22	Presented by the Western Arkansas Ballet. Arkansas Best Performing Arts Center; 785-0152 for info and tickets
<i>UAFS Symphonic Band Concert</i>	Apr. 25 - 26	Breedlove Auditorium on the UA Fort Smith campus. Tickets: \$6.; 788-7302 or <a href="http://www.uafortsmith.edu">www.uafortsmith.edu</a> for times and info





# Little Theater Begins 57th Year

Residents wanting to see quality theater don't have to travel to New York or Chicago to see their favorite shows. The Fort Smith Little Theater has announced its 57<sup>th</sup> season of productions. The theater is located at 401 North 6<sup>th</sup> St.

Patrons may purchase season ticket packages for all 6 performances or they may purchase individual performance tickets. Season ticket packages start at \$45. Tickets for individual shows are \$10 for regular shows and \$14 for musicals. More ticket information is available by calling 783-2966 or visiting the Little Theater's web site at [www.fslt.20fr.com](http://www.fslt.20fr.com).

## FORT SMITH LITTLE THEATER 2004 PERFORMANCES

<i>The Importance of Being Ernest</i> Written by Oscar Wilde Directed by Jim Moody	Feb. 12 - 21
<i>Sensuous Senator</i> Written by Michael Parker Directed by Carole Rogers	Apr. 15 - 24
<i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i> Written by Dale Wasserman Directed by Brad Kidder	Jun. 3 - 12
<i>No No Nannette</i> Written by Otto Harback & Frank Mandel Music by Vincent Youmans Directed by Paula Sharum	July 29 - Aug. 7
<i>Never Too Late</i> Written by Sumner Arthur Long Directed by Dianah Gourley	Sept. 23 - Oct. 2
<i>The Last Night of Ballyhoo</i> Written by Alfred Uhry Directed by Angela Covey	Nov. 11 - 20

### Reporter's Notebook

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## Library Offers On Line Book Club

Ever thought of reading a good book through your e-mail? The Fort Smith public library offers a free service that will let you read your favorite novel, biography or other book a few pages a day at your computer. Here's how the program works.

- \* Join the on line book club by signing up at the library's web site, [www.fspl.lib.ar.us](http://www.fspl.lib.ar.us). You can choose to receive non-fiction, fiction, business, teen or good news books. There's even an option to have audio books sent to your computer.
- \* Each morning Monday-Friday, the library will send you a 5-minute portion of your selected book. It's right there in your e-mail. By the end of the week, you'll have read 2-3 chapters.
- \* If you want to finish a book

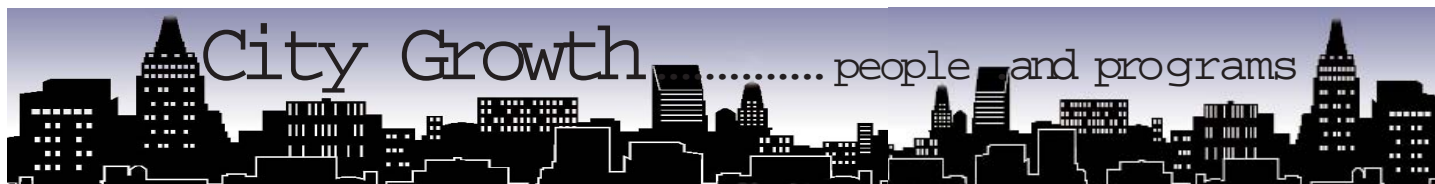
faster, you can check it out or reserve it at the library.

- \* If you leave town or go on vacation, your book selection can be forwarded to another e-mail address anywhere in the world. You can also catch up when you return, or you can temporarily leave the book club and then resubscribe when you return.

Your e-mail address won't be used for any other purpose. The library respects your privacy, and will not use your e-mail address for anything except the on line book club.

Your Fort Smith public library wants to serve you, even if you can't come to the library. The on line book clubs are a great way to read a book without leaving your home or office.

**Join Today!**



## MAJOR ROAD PROJECT COMPLETED

The widening and reconstruction of Massard Rd. from Phoenix Ave. to Zero St. was completed earlier this month. The \$11.6 million project widened the east-side thoroughfare from 2 lanes to 5 lanes.

The dangerous curve and hill in the vicinity of Rosewood Dr. was eliminated by relocating that section of Massard Rd. The project included replacement of 2 bridges along the roadway and signalization of the Zero St. intersection. Space was also provided for a future bikeway path adjacent to Massard Rd.

The roadway project was constructed with the 1¢ sales tax for streets, bridges and drainage. The bridges were reconstructed with funds from the Federal Highway Administration.

Plans are being prepared to extend Massard Rd. south of Zero St. into the Chaffee Crossing development. Construction is expected to begin in June and be completed in May, 2005.

## CITY STAFF MEMBER RECEIVES STATE APPOINTMENT

Fort Smith's geographic information system coordinator, **Russell Gibson**, has been appointed by Governor Mike Huckabee to the Arkansas state land information board. Gibson will serve a 4-year term.

Gibson has been Fort Smith's GIS coordinator for 3 years and has worked for the city 5 years. He also teaches GIS classes at UA Fort Smith, and is a nationally-recognized expert on this latest mapping technology.

## FORT SMITH WELCOMES NEW PARKS DIRECTOR

**Mike Alsup**, formerly of Goodlettsville, Tenn., has been appointed Fort Smith's director of parks and recreation. He'll replace John Dargle who resigned earlier this year to accept a position in Athens, Ga.

Alsup began his Fort Smith duties on October 20<sup>th</sup>. He previously worked 24 years for the Goodlettsville, Tenn. parks and recreation department.

Alsup holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Middle Tennessee State University and a master's degree in recreation



administration from Western Kentucky University. He also has certifications from the National Recreation and Parks Association as a parks and recreation

professional and an aquatic facility operator.

In his Fort Smith position, Alsup will oversee operation and maintenance of Fort Smith's 23 parks, community centers, swimming and wading pools, Oak Cemetery and streetside planters. He'll also be working to enhance recreation programming for the community. The parks and recreation department's annual budget is \$2.9 million.

Alsup and his wife, Lisa, have settled into Fort Smith. In their spare time, they enjoy hiking and church activities. The Alsups have 2 children who attend college. *THE FOCUS* welcomes parks and recreation director Mike Alsup and his wife to Fort Smith.

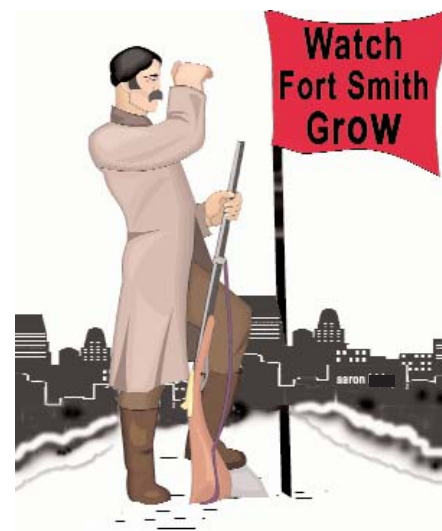
## TRAILS & GREENWAYS CONNECT FORT SMITH

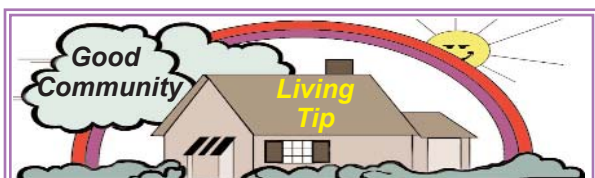
The parks and recreation department is creating a trails and greenways master plan for Fort Smith. Trails and greenways connect parks, schools, neighborhoods and shopping areas. They provide a healthy and environmentally-friendly alternative to using your car. Walkers, joggers and bicyclists find trails a fun way to travel.

LandPlan Consultants of Tulsa, Okla. has been hired to help identify corridors and design standards for a system of trails and greenways. Citizen input is a vital part of planning trails and greenways for Fort Smith.

A community workshop will be held on Thursday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m. at the Creekmore Park community center, 3301 South M St. At the workshop, citizens will help identify potential trail and greenway corridors throughout the city.

Persons needing more information about the trails and greenways plan may call the Fort Smith parks and recreation department at 784-1006.





Abandoned appliances, building materials and other debris should be removed regularly.

Left in view, these items “junk up” the neighborhood’s appearance. Call your sanitation service provider to have these items removed. The Fort Smith sanitation department may be reached at 784-2350 and Altes Sanitation is available at 646-3890.

## GOOD COMMUNITY LIVING TIP

This issue of *FOCUS ON FORT SMITH* includes a new feature to help strengthen Fort Smith’s neighborhoods. Living in a city requires everyone’s cooperation to keep neighborhoods strong and viable.

Property values are affected by the appearance of the entire neighborhood. One person who doesn’t take care of his or her property can lower the value of everyone else’s property in the neighborhood.

Citizens with concerns about property maintenance may contact the Fort Smith code enforcement department at 784-1025. An inspector will check the complaint and work with the property owner to resolve any violations.

## “CHECK MARKS FOR PARKS” PROGRAM

### .....City Parks to Benefit

A few pennies can make much good. That adage has a new meaning in Fort Smith.

Residents and business owners who want to help parks can now make donations on their municipal utility bills. All donations are tax deductible. Three donation options are available.

- \* First, residents can choose to have their bill rounded up to the next whole dollar, with the “round up” amount earmarked for parks projects. For example, if your bill is \$32.69, you can elect to have the bill rounded to \$33.00. The 31¢

addition will be combined with other donations and used to improve Fort Smith’s parks.

- \* You can elect to have a fixed donation amount added to your municipal utility bill each month. For example, you could donate \$3 each month for parks. The donated amount will be added to your municipal utility bill so that you have only 1 payment to make.
- \* You can make a one-time donation for parks improvements by adding the donation to your municipal utility bill payment. Each month’s bill has a space for making a donation.

Each month’s bill will itemize your automatic donation to parks. With any of these donation opportunities, you can participate as long as you like. If you want to discontinue an automatic donation, all you have to do is write a short letter and sign it.

Municipal utility customers desiring to make donations for parks improvements such as playground equipment and picnic areas should complete and return the application below. The utility check off program is a great opportunity to help Fort Smith’s parks prosper a few pennies at a time.



### “Check Marks for Parks” APPLICATION



Name on Account: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Account # (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please round up my monthly municipal utility bill to the next highest dollar with the donated amount earmarked for parks improvements.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please add a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to my monthly municipal utility bill for parks improvements.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand this authorization may be cancelled at any time by sending written notice.

Return to: City of Fort Smith Attn: Customer Service P.O. Box 1908 Fort Smith, AR 72902



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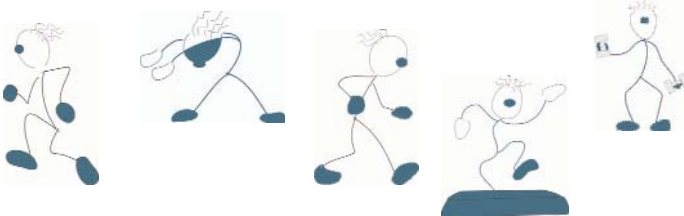
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Fort Smith's *Commit To Get Fit* campaign kicks off on April 17<sup>th</sup> with the River Valley American heart walk. The noncompetitive fitness program for all ages encourages people to invest in regular, moderate exercise and good nutrition. Last year, more than 600 residents participated in the 4-week campaign.



Challenge booklets with suggestions for a healthier lifestyle will be available at numerous area locations in March. The booklet can also be downloaded from the Internet at [www.fsark.com/GetFit](http://www.fsark.com/GetFit). Participants will be eligible for weekly prizes and a grand prize drawing at the campaign's conclusion.

